

OUR GREAT WEST

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The following lecture pretends to no greater merit than that of being a compilation from authorities upon the western territories of the Dominion. The subject was chosen, because of my earnest conviction that the one great want of Canada is a hearty appreciation by Canadians, of its splendid resources, and the promise which these, properly developed, hold out for the future. It was not written for publication, but a very general request having been made that it should be published, I have acceded to the request in the hope, that the statements contained in it in relation to "Our Great West" may, in some degree, contribute to that object.

T. W.

OUR GREAT WEST.

"The darkest hour is just before the dawn" is a saying as true of human and national affairs as it is of nature. Throughout the Old Testament history of the world, the idea of sacrifice as the condition of blessings is the great central idea. And the story of the New is that of the great sacrifice, of which all the others were but the antitypes. The darkest hour in the world's history was that in which was enacted the tragedy of Calvary, when, in sympathy with the great crime, "the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain," and from which the world emerged into a brighter era of Christian civilization and of Christian hope. The progress of human liberty has but too often been through the records of human suffering, and seas of human blood. The civil wars of our mother land were the dark hours which preceded the advent of constitutional government and of popular rights. We, in Canada, had our dark hour some thirty years ago, and we passed through it into the possession of responsible government, and of a free parliament. And still more recently, we have again had our dark hour preceding the dawn of that brighter future which is opening before us, and some of the elements of which will form the subject of my lecture to-night. For many years before the confederation of these Provinces we were rapidly approaching what to all human appearance seemed a constitutional dead-lock. In three years we had two general elections, and so evenly divided was

7
public sentiment between contending parties, that the result was in each case practically the same. The government, instead of devoting themselves to the consideration of great questions of practical improvement, were fully occupied with the, to them, paramount question of how to keep their places. The opposition, chagrined at seeing what promised to be electoral victory turned into electoral defeat, and chafing at the position from which, sometimes, the change of a single vote would have relieved them, were intent only on embarrassing their adversaries. Thus the interests of the country were lost sight of in the battle of rival factions, and in the question of who should occupy the offices of state, and dispense the patronage connected with the petty clerkships, which, under the civil service practice of the country, has, with all parties, played so important a part in the politics of Canada. This was the state of public affairs when the leaders of the two great parties, with a patriotism which did them infinite credit, consented to ground arms and unite in finding a solution for difficulties which threatened the best interests of the country. The importance of the Quebec Conference, at which was laid the basis of British American union, will be more and more realized as it comes to be viewed at a greater distance of time. It was the dawn of daylight after the dark hour of political and personal strife, and of sectarian and sectional bitterness. At it, for the first time in the Colonial history of Great Britain, the public men of the different Provinces of British America met, not in a spirit of hostility to the mother land, but to devise means which, strengthening the position of British power on this continent, would promote imperial no less than colonial interests:—"The best interests, and "present and future prosperity of British North "America will be promoted by a federal union, *under the "Crown of Great Britain*, provided such union can be

“effected on principles just to the several Provinces.” With that resolution, loyal towards the crown, and patriotic as towards the country, the members of the conference entered upon their deliberations. We have to do to-night with but one portion of the general terms of union agreed upon. By the tenth resolution it was resolved that “the North-west territory, British Columbia and Vancouver shall be admitted into the union, on such terms and conditions as the Parliament of the federated Provinces shall deem equitable, and as shall receive the assent of Her Majesty; and in the case of British Columbia or Vancouver, as shall be agreed to by the Legislature of such Province.” Thus, at the very outset, before even the terms upon which the union of the old Provinces was to be effected had been fixed, the public men of British America united in a formal expression of opinion in favour of the acquisition of our Great West.

And that being acquired, what was the Dominion whose foundations were laid at that conference in 1864 and confirmed on the first July, 1867, amid the booming of cannon, the rattle of the *feu de joie*, and the acclamations of a joyous people? Let me give you from one of the ablest of the many able speeches through which the scheme was commended to Parliament, this eloquent description of the Dominion of Canada as it was then contemplated, and as it will ere long exist: “Look, sir,” said Mr. Brown, “at the map of the continent of America, and mark that island (Newfoundland) commanding the mouth of the noble river that almost cuts the continent in twain. Well, sir, that island is equal in extent to the Kingdom of Portugal. Cross the straits to the main land, and you touch the hospitable shores of Nova Scotia, a country as large as the Kingdom of Greece. Then mark the sister Province of New Brunswick—equal in extent to Denmark and Switzerland combined. Pass up the River St. Lawrence

“to Lower Canada, a country as large as France. Pass
“on to Upper Canada, a country twenty thousand
“square miles larger than Great Britain and Ireland put
“together. Cross over the continent to the shores of
“the Pacific, and you are in British Columbia, the
“land of golden promise, equal in extent to the Austrian
“empire. I speak not now of the vast Indian territories
“that lie between—greater in extent than the whole
“soil of Russia, and that will ere long, I trust, be opened
“up to civilization under the auspices of the British
“American Confederation. Well, sir, the bold scheme
“in your hands is nothing less than to gather all
“these countries into one, to organize them all under
“one government, with the protection of the British flag,
“and in heartiest sympathy and affection with our
“fellow subjects in the land that gave us birth.” Four
years after the speech from which I have just quoted
was delivered, the Queen’s proclamation issued, handing
over Prince Rupert’s land and the North-west territories
to the Dominion of Canada. Six years after it was
delivered, another Royal proclamation issued, creating
British Columbia a Province of the Dominion. Before
the first Parliament of Canada had completed its term,
representatives from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts
joined in its deliberations, and to-day we stand in the
presence of that great fact of British American union,
which its most enthusiastic promoters scarcely
ventured to hope for during the life time of themselves
or their contemporaries.

I ask you to consider with me to-night some facts in
relation to our Great West; and then I propose to state
some of the grounds which we have for congratulation
at the acquisition of these splendid territories, and some
of the results which we may fairly anticipate from
them.

A glance at the map will show you that the larger
portion of North America is Canadian territory, and that

of that territory but a small portion is included within the boundaries of the old organized Provinces. With the exception of a portion of the Labrador coast, which has been, and is still, under the nominal jurisdiction of Newfoundland, all that vast tract of country lying North, North-east and North-west, of the old Province of Canada, from the shores of the Pacific to those of the Atlantic Ocean, was, up to four years ago, claimed and governed by a Company of Capitalists in London who were incorporated by Royal charter in 1669, under the title of the Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay. One portion of the territory was claimed and held under the charter itself, the remaining and greater portion of it under a Crown license to trade. The charter was granted to Prince Rupert and nineteen other English gentlemen, and the name Rupert's Land was ordered to be given to any territory over which they might subsequently obtain dominion. The charter gave full powers to make rules not inconsistent with the laws of the realm, and punish offenders against them ; to send home to England as prisoners, any British subject attempting to trade or settle within the territories without the consent of the Company. They were, in fact, made despotic rulers over all the land, and for these extraordinary powers and privileges, the consideration stated in the charter is one that may well excite a smile, viz: two elks and two black beavers so often as the sovereign should come into that territory—a very safe provision for the Company, as the sovereign was by no means likely to trouble the territory with his presence. This charter is an antiquarian curiosity, and the feeling which its perusal excites is one of surprise that it should have lasted so long as the fundamental law of such a vast territory. The difficulties which arose under it, the rivalries between different trading companies which marked the history of the country, the feeble attempt under Lord Selkirk to promote the

7
formation of a settlement, and the practical failure of that attempt, are all fortunately matters of the past. By the arrangement under which the rights of the Company were extinguished for a money consideration, and the blessings of constitutional government given to the territory, a new era has been opened up; and the work which belongs to Canada to-day is that of developing fully this splendid heritage. Look at it for a moment. The Province of Manitoba, which is the leader of the group of Provinces into which the territory is destined hereafter to be divided, occupies but a very small part of the vast domain. Lying between the 96° and 99° of west longitude it comprises less than ten millions acres of land, a million four hundred thousand of which are reserved for the extinguishment of the claims of the half-breeds. The territory itself, the great North-west lying east of the Rocky Mountains, contains no less than 2,206,725 square miles, or 1,412,304,000 acres. It is difficult to realise the extent of areas thus stated. But when it is remembered that these figures represent a territory nearly two-thirds in size that of the entire continent of Europe, some idea of its vastness may be formed. It is not simply its vastness, however, which is important; its character gives equal promise for the future. By the report of the Secretary of State we learn that 76,800,000 acres are prairie lands, with occasional groves or belts of timber; three hundred millions of acres are timber land, with occasional prairies, all suitable for the cultivation of wheat and other cereals; six hundred millions suitable for the cultivation of barley, potatoes and grasses, and having sufficient timber for ordinary purposes; while a little over four hundred million are rock and swamp, where the timber growth is stunted or disappears altogether, and which are set down as the region of the fur bearing animals. That is the territory which now belongs to Canada, and whose settlement should form

the leading feature of the policy of our public men. In this work they have nature upon their side. Until comparatively recently, it is true, opinions were conflicting as to the character of the country. An old friend of my own in Ontario, who had formerly been an officer in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, could scarcely listen with patience to the suggestion that a country which, to him, seemed specially fitted by Providence as a field for the operations of a great fur trading corporation, could be made the home of peaceful settlement and pastoral and agricultural industry. He was a fair type of a large number whose personal acquaintanceship gave them apparent right to speak with authority on the subject, but whose occupation in the territory in reality made them the most unreliable guides in forming a just conception of its actual capabilities. On the other hand I recall, as one of the most gratifying scenes at the Detroit commercial convention, the enthusiastic claim of Mr. Taylor, of the Treasury Department at Washington, to appear as the representative of the British North-west, and his glowing description of the part yet to be played by that vast region in the commerce of the continent. The opinions of the Hudson's Bay officer are fast being answered by the results of careful enquiry and research. The opinions of the warm-hearted Minnesotian, whom his government have since, with great appropriateness, honoured with the position of American Consul at Fort Garry, are by the same processes being more than confirmed. The very name by which a large portion of the territory is known on this continent, "the fertile belt" is expressive of its real character. The statements of travellers to Manitoba are almost fabulous in reference to the productiveness of the soil. A friend who visited Fort Garry just before the troubles of 1869, assured me that he saw one field from which an average of fifty bushels of wheat to the acre

had been reaped; and the ground had been sown with the same crop and had yielded the same general results for ten years, without any manuring. Dr. Hurlbert, in his most interesting work on the climates, productions and resources of Canada, gives the following comparative table of wheat production in the Red River settlement and in four States of the Union:

Red River	40	bushels to the acre.
Minnesota	20	" "
Wisconsin	14	" "
Pennsylvania	15	" "
Ohio	15	" "

Or in other words, the production in Manitoba is twice as great as that in Minnesota, confessedly one of the best wheat-producing States in the American Union. That, however, is only in Manitoba, about which opinion has now become pretty well confirmed as to its entire fitness for settlement. It is but a speck in the midst of the vast region. What of the rest? Mr. McLeod, who spent many years of his life in the territory, whose father and grandfather were prominent servants of the Company, holds that beyond the belt known as the fertile belt, "there is in our North-west, an area, continuous in every direction and easily accessible to its utmost limits, containing over *three hundred millions* of acres of wheat and pasture lands, with forests of finest timber, and the largest known coal and bitumen, and also probably the richest gold areas in the world, a land teeming with animal and vegetable life, extending to the very Arctic circle." Mr. Sandford Fleming, whose reputation has been acquired by plodding industry and the greatest accuracy in all his reports, published a report in 1863, from which the same impression of this territory is derived. The country between Lake Superior and the eastern banks of Lake Winnipeg, he described as of the crystalline rock formation "a system which is not generally

"favourable to agriculture, although here and there "many fertile spots are to be found." But when he comes to speak of the country lying to the west of Lake Winnipeg, he grows enthusiastic in his praise. "To the westward of these lakes and Winnipeg," he says, "and between them nearly to the Rocky Mountains, "the whole territory is of the Silurian and Devonian "formations, both eminently favourable to agriculture, "the former prevailing throughout the fertile peninsula "of Upper Canada. At its base, the Silurian deposits "range a thousand miles from east to west, and extend "about five hundred miles to the northward, where "the Devonian system commences and continues to the "Arctic sea. * * * About one hundred and fifty miles "east of the Rocky Mountains, the great coal bed "commences, which gives our territory so important "an advantage over that which lies to the south. So "far as has been ascertained, it is over fifty miles in "width." Mr. McLeod concludes from the various authorities which he has consulted, that the territory contains four hundred thousand square miles of coal area.

In the recent contract entered into for the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway the land grant, required to supplement what may be found deficient along the line of the railway, is to be selected from between the 49th and 57th degrees north latitude, from which it might be inferred that these were the limits of the district fit for settlement. But according to Sir John Richardson, at Fort Laird, on or very near the 60th parallel of N. latitude, barley and oats yield good crops, and in favorable seasons wheat ripens well, while near the northern limit of the Pacific railway land reserve is Dunvegan, on the southern bend of the Peace river, about 150 miles in a straight line from the ridge line of the Rocky Mountains. The period of cultivation at this point is from April to October, and it

is a fact worth stating that the mean temperature at Toronto and Quebec does not vary more than half a degree with that at Dunvegan, while the difference between that at Halifax, is nearly two degrees in favour of the former. Mr. McLeod assures us that as to the winter cold of this north-western point, its steadiness and dryness are, for both man and beast, better than that of any other place in the Dominion, except perhaps Manitoba.

Before taking leave of this great northwest country, let me give you the following valuable American testimony to its character. It is from a report to the New York Chamber of Commerce:—
“There is in the heart of North America, a distinct
“subdivision of which Lake Winnipeg may be regarded
“as the centre. This subdivision, like the valley of the
“Mississippi, is distinguished for the fertility of its soil,
“and for the extent and gentle slope of its great plains,
“watered by rivers of great length, and admirably
“adapted for steam navigation. It has a climate not
“exceeding in severity that of many portions of Canada
“and the Eastern States. It will in all respects
“compare favourably with some of the most densely
“peopled portions of the continent of Europe. In other
“words, it is admirably adapted to become the seat of
“a numerous, hardy, and prosperous community. It
“has an area equal to eight or ten first-class American
“States. Its great river, the Saskatchewan, carries a
“navigable water-line to the very base of the Rocky
“Mountains. It is not at all improbable that the
“valley of this river may yet offer the best route for a
“railroad to the Pacific.”

Having thus glanced very briefly at Manitoba and the North-west territories, let us cross the Rocky Mountains into what has appropriately been called “the land of golden promise,” and which was, up to a comparatively few years, under the jurisdiction of the

Hudson's Bay Company. How shall we cross the mountains? That is a question possessing much importance in view of the proposed construction of the Canada Pacific Railway. Our American neighbors found this passage the most serious difficulty in the way of the construction of their Pacific Railway. The pass with them extended over 150 miles in length, the height being some eight thousand feet. Their success in overcoming this difficulty is one of the greatest triumphs which American energy and pluck have ever achieved. As we possess, as I shall have occasion further on to show, the best portion of the Continent for purposes of settlement, so do we possess the most feasible route for a trans-continental railway. Mr. Waddington, a British Columbian, who was an enthusiast on the subject of a Canadian Pacific Railway, and whose sudden death at Ottawa just on the eve of the triumph of his views, was deeply regretted by all who knew him, made a personal exploration of different passes of these Rocky Mountains, eight in number, and varying in height from 3,760 to 6,347 feet. He strongly favored the most northerly or Yellow Head Pass, from Athabaska to the Upper Fraser River. The approach to this is through the rich fertile belt, drained by the north branch of the Saskatchewan. And it is in the very latitude of this belt, that according to Mr. Waddington, the great barrier of the Rocky Mountains is cleft asunder, so that the road runs along this fertile zone in a direct line to the lowest and easiest pass, as to a natural gateway leading to the Pacific. Mr. McLeod, on the other hand, favors a pass still further north, that known as the Peace River Pass. An authority which he quotes, states that on the 6th April the spring birds were singing about the post, and spring fully set in. The 10th of May record of Mackenzie as to the flush of the sweet early green of the foliage, and bursting of blossom, confirms—from our experience in Canada of

such arborial development—the 6th April record. We, too, have spring birds, birds singing early sometimes, and the winter there is no longer than ours. “There is, in fact,” says Mr. McLeod, “no snow difficulty whatever at the Peace River Pass, not even in mid-winter; the threshold is ever clear as that of an open gateway—ever clean swept by every wind of heaven. It is the most magnificent gateway between the two ‘worlds’ of this earth, and bears the isotherm of strongest human development. A grand territorial road (with branches) direct to it, and there striking the centre of a gold region, probably the richest in the world, would fast people the whole intervening ocean of wheat field.” And this reference to snow difficulty justifies the remark that no greater popular error prevails in relation to these North-western latitudes than that they are regions of perpetual snow. Mr. Waddington, who wrote from personal knowledge, as well as from the information of North-western travellers, dwells especially upon this point. He says:—“As a general rule, the snow in Canada is easily removed by the snow-ploughs, which are used both there and in the Eastern States, and the trains run regularly all winter, with the exception of an occasional snow-storm. But as we get further into the interior, the thickness of the snow continues to diminish with the decrease of atmospheric moisture, till in the plain of the Saskatchewan it does not pack over fourteen inches in winter, and then evaporates quickly; and even in the Yellow Head Pass in the Rocky Mountains, it barely attains from two to three feet. In addition to these facts, the isothermal lines, which run in a W.N.W. curve across the Continent, show an increase in the mean temperature on the Pacific coast equal to fully 11 degrees of latitude as compared with the Atlantic; whilst the range of the thermometer becomes less, and the winter and summer temperature

" more equable. Thus, the mean annual temperature at
" Cumberland House in lat. 54, long. 101°40', is only one
" degree lower than that of Toronto, ten degrees more
" to the south, but also 42 degrees more to the east;
" and in Victoria, Vancouver Island, where snow
" rarely falls, and the arbutus grows in the open air to
" the size of a tree, the climate closely resembles that
" of Nantes or La Rochelle in France. In short, if the
" trains run all winter in Canada, they could do it, *a*
" *fortiori*, across the Western portion of the Continent."
Mr. McLeod, too, arguing for his Peace River Pass
through the Rocky Mountains, meets this same objection
thus:—"The winter at Fort St. James is, I take it, no
" worse for farming or grazing, than that of Ontario on
" the average, with probably no more snow, and entail-
" ing little or no housing of cattle. In fact it is reported
" that the snow varies in average depth there, only from
" six to eighteen inches, and covers the ground only
" from January to March. On the same winter line of
" climate on the east side, say the country immediately
" north of the Saskatchewan to the Athabaska Valley,
" inclusive, the cattle and horses winter out in the open
" and get fat, and even further north to the Peace river
" and to the north of it, hundreds of miles in that low
" forest land which extends continuously five hundred
" miles north of Dunvegan and to the very summits
" of the hills of the Clear Water Valley,—Methy
" Portage—the wood buffaloes in midwinter, 'sun,' as
" Simpson describes the sight, 'their fat sides' and show
" then and there beef to make any beef-eater's, or more
" exquisite still, any buffalo meat-eater's teeth water."

These authorities are sufficient to prove that the pass
over the Rocky Mountains, even so far north as the
Peace River, and the country immediately west of it,
in British Columbia, not only offer no serious obstruc-
tions to Canadian ambition to have a Pacific Railway
of our own, but that on the contrary they present as fair a

field for railway enterprise as any now open to Canadian projectors.

Having crossed the Mountains, let us look for a few moments at this latest addition to British American unification, this youngest member of the Canadian Provinces. I am indebted for the facts which I am about to state, chiefly to a most interesting prize essay, entitled, "The Dominion at the West," published by the authority of the Government of British Columbia. The Province first became a Colony in 1858, under the administration of him who has so recently been laid among England's greatest sons in that hallowed spot, the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey—I mean Sir Bulwer Lytton. In 1866 a union took place between British Columbia and Vancouver, and, on the 20th July, 1871, the United Colonies entered the Canadian Confederation. The limits of the Province may be thus stated. Conterminous on the south with the United States territory of Washington, the 49th parallel of north latitude forms the boundary from the Gulf of Georgia to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, which it intersects in longitude 114° west, there touching on the Dominion territory of the North-west. Thence along the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the parallel of Mount St. Elias in latitude 62°. Thence southward as far as 54° 40', along the strip of coast line, ten marine leagues in width, formerly occupied by Russia, recently purchased by the United States, and now forming part of the Territory of Alaska. Thence southward to the entrance of the Strait of Fuca, including Queen Charlotte and Vancouver Islands, and the vast archipelago connected therewith. It owes the first chief interest which it excited to the gold discoveries which followed those of Australia and California, and which drew to it a number of adventurous men, among them a good many Canadians, in search of the precious metal. Although to-day, fortunately, British Columbia presents

other attractions than those which its gold-fields furnish, gold-mining is still not an inconsiderable industry. In the thirteen years from 1858 to 1870 inclusive, the export of gold exceeded twenty-one and a quarter millions of dollars, while that for 1871, the last for which we have any returns, reached the large sum of \$1,349,580. The white population of the Province is estimated at about fifteen thousand inhabitants, its entire population, including Indians and Chinese, being about sixty thousand. There are a good many growing settlements, but to these it is not necessary to refer in detail. The chief town is Victoria, the capital of the Province, situated near the south-eastern extremity of Vancouver's Island. Its position, both as a distributing point for the Province at large, and a nucleus for foreign trade, is extremely favorable. It is three miles from Esquimaux, an extensive harbor, capable of receiving vessels of the largest class, and destined to become the future entrepôt of a national commerce, the extent of which it is difficult to foresee. Esquimaux is the station of Her Majesty's ships on this portion of the coast. Here are the naval yard, the hospital and other necessary appendages for the requirements of the squadron. A graving dock has been contracted for, its construction being undertaken by the Government of Canada as one of the conditions of union, capable of admitting ships of the largest class; and everything indicates improvements of a permanent and substantial character.

In the settled portions of Vancouver Island all the common cereals are produced abundantly. Wheat yields ordinarily from 30 to 40 bushels per acre; oats produce frequently as high as 60 bushels. Indian corn, though not largely cultivated, ripens freely by the end of September. Potatoes, turnips, and all the usual varieties of culinary vegetables, grow to a great size. The climate seems to be specially well adapted

for the growth of hops. These are cultivated sufficiently to meet the local demands ; the surplus, if any, being exported to San Francisco, where their superior quality secures for them a ready sale. Upon the character of these hops valuable testimony has been given by Messrs. Wm. Dow & Co., of this city, who declare them to be "worth fully ten cents per lb. more than the best Canadian growth." The average yield is from 1200 lbs. in ordinary years to 2,000 lbs. per acre in favorable seasons. On the peninsula, near Victoria, the musk melon and the water melon attain perfect maturity in the open air, without artificial aid ; the tomato and the capsicum yield copiously ; the peach ripens its fruit as a standard ; and the grape (of the Isabella variety) produces abundantly, and comes to full maturity in a favorable exposure. Orchard fruits are cultivated abundantly throughout the settlements, and with marked success. This statement, by Mr. Anderson, of the character of Vancouver Island, is more than sustained by Mr. James Richardson, of the Canadian Geological Staff, who, in a paper contributed to the *British Colonist*, bears testimony to the excellent character of the Island from an agricultural point of view. The main land of British Columbia, Mr. Anderson divides into three large divisions or districts, each bearing some general distinctive peculiarity. The characteristics of the lower district are a surface thickly wooded in most parts with trees of enormous growth, chiefly varieties of the fir and pine, and intermixed with the red cedar and the maple-plane. Low alluvial points fringe these thickets. These, as well as the numerous islets along the river, are covered with aspens, balsam-poplars, and alders of luxuriant growth. In the lower part are some extensive meadows, yielding in their natural state, heavy crops of a coarse but nutritious grass, and under cultivation, enormous returns of cereals and other produce.

On the verge of the second, or central, division, a marked change commences. The copious rains which fall in the lower districts are greatly modified after we pass the mountainous ridge through which the river bursts near Yale. Evidences of a drier climate appear at every step. The character of the vegetation changes. About Lytton the cactus begins to appear. In spots along the Thompson, the artimesia and other shrubs indicative of a dry and hot climate are found; and in lieu of the thickly wooded luxuriance of the lower region, a succession of open valleys, covered with fine pasture and bordered by grassy hills, in parts more or less wooded, delights the eye of the traveller. Here and there belts of forest intervene, amid which broad expanses of open land lie scattered at intervals. This general description may be regarded as applying to a very large tract of country, extending from Alexandria on the Fraser, in latitude $52^{\circ} 33'$ to the southern boundary line on the Ockinagan river; and thence at intervals towards the south-eastern angle of the Province. Near this point, however, the aspect of the country changes, assuming in its general features a very sterile character, which increases as we cross the American frontier. We have entered, in fact, upon the North-western angle of the great American desert, which, happily, enters but a few miles into British territory.

The third division of British Columbia, from Alexandria to the mountains, varies materially from the other two. The agricultural region, properly so-called, may be said to terminate in the vicinity of Alexandria, though there are many small spots beyond that point which may be advantageously cultivated for culinary vegetables and the harder cereals. Generally speaking, it is a wooded country, through which many open spots of excellent soil are interspersed with large tracts of luxuriant pasture—especially in the

direction of Fraser and Stuart Lakes, and in the Chilcotin country. This upper region, however, is to be considered more especially as the mining district, and any partial cultivation that may be attempted to meet an extended market in connection with the mines, must be regarded only as subsidiary to the main supply derived from a remoter source.

The briefest reference to British Columbia would be incomplete without some mention of its gold fields and other mineral resources. In 1863, Lieut. A. Spencer Palmer, of the Royal Engineers, made a report upon the gold mines of the colony, which is quoted in the most recent publications. "The general tendency", he said, "of the auriferous ranges throughout the colony leads to the conjecture that the future explorations will discover an almost unbroken continuation of rich deposits, maintaining a north-north-westerly direction, and occupying a large portion of the great elbow of the Fraser River. Cariboo is closely packed with mountains of considerable altitude, singularly tumbled and irregular in character, and presenting steep and thickly wooded slopes. Here and there tremendous masses, whose summits are from 6,000 to 7,000 feet above the sea, tower above the general level, and form centres of radiation for subordinate ranges. This mountain system is drained by innumerable streams of every size from large brooks to tiny rivulets, known respectively in mining phraseology as 'creeks' and 'gulches,' which run in every imaginable direction of the compass, and, winding among the valleys and gorges, discharge themselves into the larger streams or rivers, which at length conduct their waters to the Fraser. The most remunerative mining is generally formed near the head waters of the creeks, in close proximity to the mountain clusters, which seem to be the great centres of wealth; and thus some of the less attractive

"diggings on the rivers and on the lower parts of the creeks have as yet scarcely claimed attention."

The chief mining localities outside of Cariboo are at Big Bend, above the Arrow Lakes on the Columbia river; the Koutânaï mines on the tributary of the Columbia of that name, and on the Peace River. There are besides inferior "diggings," occupied chiefly by Chinese, and others who, like them, are content with minor profits, where by patient industry a moderate competence is obtained. There is no doubt, however, that the mineral gold-wealth of the Province has as yet been but very partially exposed.

In addition to these gold mines, rich copper leads abound along the coast; so too do silver leads, sufficiently rich to justify the investment of money for their development. Some attempts in this direction have been made both with the copper and silver mines, but the capital has been fritted away in a number of companies instead of being combined in one, and has consequently been lost. The coal mines are more favorably situated. The shipments from the mines, according to the official returns, were in 1871 valued at \$178,848, of which \$122,148 were foreign export, and the balance for home consumption. The first half year of 1872 showed an export of \$153,522, being a very marked increase upon the previous year. The oldest mine at Nanaimo, commenced by the Hudson's Bay Company, has for the last twelve years been the property of an English company, bearing the name of the Vancouver Coal Company, who share a handsome annual dividend for their investment. There are two other mines in the same vicinity: one of these, the Harewood, owned also by English capitalists, is not at present worked; the other, the Dunsmuir, is in its infancy, but promises to be very successful. There is also a fine seam of coal, requiring only capital for its working, at Baynes' Sound, near Comox, besides that at the north side of


the island, and another of anthracite on Queen Charlotte's. So far as can be discovered there is no coal at all comparable with that of Vancouver elsewhere on the Pacific Coast; and the people look forward to an immense impetus to the trade should the reciprocity treaty be renewed with the United States, as will probably be the case before many years.

Mr. Anderson thus sums up the qualifications of British Columbia as a field for settlement:—"I may succinctly state, that though it may never become a large exporter of cereal products, like the Western States of America or California, it possesses within itself all the requisites for success, and the power to support, in connection with its varied industries and its external relations, a population, at least of several millions, in ease, happiness and comparative affluence. I would fain avoid the imputation of seeking possibly to draw a picture too highly coloured; but I am free, nevertheless, to state my own personal convictions in all sincerity. I conceive of no country possessing greater solid attractions. The varied climate and capabilities of the several sections, whereby diversity of taste is accommodated; the general salubrity and proved fertility of the whole; the magnificent commercial prospects that loom in the not distant future; and, not least, the genuine home feeling which impresses every English settler whose lot has hitherto been cast within the Province—all combine to recommend it as a future home for those who, weary of the Old World, are bent on seeking a wider scene for the expansion of their energies, amid 'fresh fields and pastures new.'"

Having thus, ladies and gentlemen, referred with as much detail as the nature of a lecture will admit to the character of these recent additions to the Dominion of Canada, to which for convenience I have applied the name "our great west", permit me, in the few remaining

minutes that I have, to state some of the grounds which we have for congratulation at the acquisition of these splendid territories, and some of the results which we may fairly anticipate from them. The admission of the Great West was not effected without challenge. This is neither the time nor the occasion to discuss the merits of the controversy; but as the union has been effected, I may, without impropriety, say that the result is matter for patriotic congratulation. In the first place, in the interests of British power on this continent of America, Canadian extension to the Pacific ocean was a matter of the most pressing importance. We can only hold our own as a Dominion, "under the Crown of Great Britain," by securing a largely increased population, and by the full development of our material resources. I speak as a loyal British subject to loyal British subjects, and I know I will have your sympathy when I say that the full establishment of British power in this Dominion is an object before which all mere questions of detail in terms of Canadian union should give place. How long, think you, could we maintain our position, if the territories to the west of us were permitted to fall into the American Union? That was the contingency which was by no means a remote one. The available new lands fitted for settlement in the United States are well nigh exhausted. That is a statement which may provoke question, but it is a statement made upon American authority. In referring to the divisions of British Columbia, I spoke of the angle of the great American desert which crosses the line there. Let me give you some American authorities as to the extent of that desert:—Dr. Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution, speaks thus of it:—"The progress of settlement a few miles west of the Upper Missouri River, "and west of the Mississippi, beyond the 98th degree of longitude, is rendered impossible by the "condition of climate and soil which prevail there. . .

"The Rocky Mountain region, and the sterile belt east of it, occupy an area about equal to one-third of the whole surface of the United States, which, with our present knowledge of the laws of nature, and their application to economical purposes, must ever remain of little value to the husbandman."



The following is from the report of the explorations and surveys for a railway route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean:—"The sterile region on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains begins about 500 or 600 miles west of the Mississippi, and its breadth varies from 200 to 400 miles; and it is then succeeded by the Rocky Mountain range, which, rising from an altitude of 5,200 in lat., 32° reaches 10,000 feet in lat., 38° and declines to 7,400 feet in lat.; $42^{\circ} 24'$, and about 6,000 in lat., 47° . Along this range, isolated peaks and ridges rise into the limits of perpetual snow, in some instances attaining an elevation of 17,000 feet. The breadth of the Rocky Mountain range varies from 500 to 600 miles. The soil of the greater part of the sterile region is necessarily so from its composition, and were it well constituted for fertility, from the absence of rain at certain seasons. The general character of extreme sterility likewise belongs to the country embraced in the mountain region."

The State geologist of California, Professor W. P. Blake, gives the following description of the Colorado desert:—"Its area is some 9,000 square miles, and, excepting the Colorado which cuts across its lower end, is without river or lake. It stretches off to the horizon on all sides without one glimpse of vegetation or life. Its surface is ashy and parched; its frame of mountains rise in rugged pinnacles of black rock, bare even of soil. Words are unequal to the task of describing its apparent expanses, the purity of its air, the silence of its night, the brilliancy of the stars that overhang it, the tints of the mountains at daybreak,

“the looming up of those beyond the horizon, the glare
“of the mid-day sun, the violence of its local storms
“of dust and sand. Parts are entirely destitute even
“of sand, being smooth, compact, sun-baked clay;
“other parts are covered with heaps of sand, disposed
“like snow drifts in waves of 50 or 80 feet in height.”
From Blodget I quote as follows:—“Fremont found
“artemisia or sage at a point but little beyond the 96th
“meridian on the Kansas, and from this meridian to the
“Rocky Mountains it constantly increased in
“abundance. Further south, plains of salt and
“gypsum occur at about the 97th meridian, and near
“the Red River (lat. 31°) in Upper Texas, both
“become very abundant again, occupying most of the
“country. In Lower Texas, at the same meridian, they
“characterize the desert of the Nueces river—thus
“commencing with great regularity at nearly the same
“point of longitude for the whole distance, or for
“*nearly twenty-five degrees of latitude*. The cactus is a
“characteristic plant of the arid region, also. It
“begins still further east, marking sandy localities, in
“some cases east of the Mississippi. But the larger
“forms of cactus, and the ‘interminable sage desert,’
“have their home in the great interior plains and basins,
“and they are as decisive of climate in respect of
“humidity as the glittering efflorescences which are so
“conspicuous a phenomenon there.”

Other authorities might be cited, but these will suffice. Dr. Hurlbert, referring to them says:—“These
“statements show that the region of summer droughts,
“the desert area—begins at the 97th meridian, a little
“west of the Mississippi, and extends from north to
“south over the whole territory of the United States,
“from the 49th parallel beyond the southern boundary
“of Texas. From this meridian, the 97th, this climatic
“defect—the want of rain in summer—diminishes
“eastward but increases westward, rendering more than

“half the area of the United States either altogether “useless as an agricultural country, or very inferior “to the country east and north of that region.” Now the point which I desire to make by these quotations is that the tendency of population, having exhausted the cultivatable areas of the United States, must find its way into the more favoured territories to the north. Suppose that, haggling over terms of union, we had permitted the vast territories to become peopled from the United States, under the auspices of American enterprise and as the result of American energy, is it an extravagant belief to say that these populations would have been drawn to the country that fostered their interests, that constructed railways into their territory, that developed their resources, rather than to that one which had spurned and neglected them? So far as British Columbia was concerned, some of its public men were already discussing the question of annexation to the American Union; and there can be little doubt, that but for union with Canada, the Colony must have drifted into the arms of the neighbouring republic. What would be Canada’s chances, with the west thus alienated from her, hemmed in between Lake Superior and the Atlantic coast? Thank God, and I use the term not flippantly, but reverently, we are not called upon to consider that contingency, and in that fact I think we have one of the chief grounds for congratulation at the acquisition of “Our Great West.”

Then we may congratulate ourselves, because in this acquisition, we have secured Western homes on Canadian soil, for the restless sons of Canada, who are seized with that insatiable desire to travel towards the land of the setting sun, which seems so marked a characteristic of the age. It is difficult to estimate the damage that has been done to Canada, by the statement, too true unfortunately, that many Canadians emigrate to the United States. We have lost a good

many Canadians, by this process, but after all the emigration has been nothing like so great as it has been from some of the States of the Union. I had occasion a few months ago to investigate this subject of intermigration, for a paper which I prepared for the *Canadian Monthly*, and the results were so striking that I cannot better illustrate my argument than by repeating them here. The details of the census of 1870 have not yet reached me, so that I have not examined them on this point; but those of 1860 are sufficient for the purpose. By them it appears that of the native-born population, leaving out of account altogether the migrations of the population of foreign birth, who, after a residence of a year or two in one state removed to another, no less than 5,774,443 persons had removed from the state in which they were born. The migrations were almost exclusively to the Western States,—as the following table will show, the States being those which had up to that time received a larger number of persons born in other States of the Union than they had lost of persons born within their own limits :—

Alabama,	196,080	Michigan,	303,582
Arkansas,	195,835	Minnesota,	78,803
California,	154,307	Mississippi,	145,239
Florida,	38,549	Missouri,	428,222
Illinois,	676,250	Oregon,	30,474
Indiana,	455,719	Texas,	224,345
Iowa,	376,081	Wisconsin,	250,410
Kansas,	82,562	District of Columbia,	25,079
Louisiana,	73,722	Territories,	76,201

Six of these States have each received from other States of the Union a larger, in some cases a very much larger, number of persons, natives of other States, than the entire number of British Americans resident in all the States combined. In the analysis of the emigration returns given by the American Census Commissioners, the entire number from British America is stated at rather under a quarter of a million. This number is, of course, not confined to native British Americans. It includes all who, after a residence of a few months or

years in this country, emigrated to the States. Yet how unfair is the use made of the fact of this emigration will be apparent when it is remembered that seven States of the Union, all of them having the reputation of being tolerably prosperous States, had up to 1860 lost a larger native population by emigration than British America had lost of native and foreign as well. The seven states were, Louisiana, 331,904; New York, 867,032; North Carolina, 272,606; Ohio, 593,043; Pennsylvania, 582,512; Tennessee, 344,765; Virginia, 399,700. With the exception of New York, all these states are greatly inferior in population to British America, so that the proportion of persons emigrating from them is much greater. Even the states which a few years ago were regarded as the far Western States, the very paradise for the emigrant seeking a western home, have lost largely by migration to new states still further west. New York, in the short period of ten years, 1850 to 1860, lost no less than 332,750 of its native population, and Ohio in the same time 358,748. With a Great West of our own the tables will be turned. Not only will Canadian youth in search of the far off hills which are proverbially greenest, find in our own great west all that his ambition could ask, but the Americans, who are seized with a similar roving disposition, will be forced to go to the only remaining unsettled territories of the continent which are fit for settlement.

And as with this intermigration, so with immigration. It is a curious study to notice how emigration has followed the opening of western districts. From 1815 to 1840, the number of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland to the United States was 458,407, while to British America the number reached 532,192. During the next twenty years, down to 1860, the numbers were 2,589,799 to the United States, and only 664,329 to British America. Down to 1870 the relative

numbers are about the same, the difference, if any, being in favor of the United States. Now, as showing at once the cause and the result of these figures, look at the progress of population in eight of the western States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, and Wisconsin. The population of all these States combined was, in 1840, 1,224,625, and in 1870 it had reached 7,340,973. Only the first two appeared in the census returns before 1840; Iowa and Wisconsin appeared for the first time in that year. Minnesota made its first official appearance in 1850, and the other three appeared for the first time in 1860. While the increase of population in the whole thirty-seven States of the union, was between 1840 and 1870, 130 per cent., that of the eight States I have mentioned was a fraction over 500 per cent. And this increase in the extreme western States has been growing larger each year. Thus the numbers added to the population of Minnesota between 1850 and 1860 were 163,357, and during the last decade, between 1860 and 1870, they reached 268,862, an excess of over 100,000. The three States of Kansas, Nebraska, and Nevada, the most recently organized States had a population in 1860 of 141,898, which had increased in 1870 to 507,453. These figures, which are perhaps dry in the recital of them, are the proofs that westward the tide of emigration wends its way. The opening up of our Great West gives us the field by which we may compete, more than equally, with our American neighbours in the emigration markets of the old world; and by which we may offer to our brothers in the good old mother land, the benefit of western homes, under the protection of the British flag, and in the enjoyment of British institutions. Great Britain sends forth its quarter of a million people annually to swell the power of a great rival, and possibly some day, hostile, nation. Surely imperial considerations will be promoted in the opening

up of territories which will secure the continued allegiance of these wanderers from the parent home.

I have left myself no time to speak of the Pacific railway, that great interoceanic highway, in which the people of Montreal have just shown that they take a deep and a worthy interest; or of that consideration of a road to the east through British territory, which may prove yet of so deep interest to the British nation. They too constitute grounds of congratulation at the acquisition of our Great West.

I have only in conclusion to ask, What is to be the future of these splendid possessions? They contain, as we have seen, all the elements for a great nation; they give promise of being rapidly peopled by the influence of that great tide of western migration which has made our neighbours, within a century—starting with a smaller population and with infinitely less advantages in other respects than we possess—a nation of forty millions, and a power scarcely second to any in the world. There is the skeleton, to be filled in by the progress of events until it assumes the full stature of robust manhood. But a nation depends not alone upon wide fields and great material resources. You, Bible students, as the members of a Young Men's Christian Association are, know, not simply from the bald statement, but from the whole record of Bible history, that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation. Upon the character of the Canadian people must depend the future character of this great Dominion. Let me exhort you to preparation for the serious responsibilities which the future has in store for you; and if you are true to yourselves, true to your country, true to your God, we may look forward with head erect and heart and pulse beating high, to the full development of that national greatness which we will owe in no small degree to the acquisition of OUR GREAT WEST.

